

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

AMCONSUL LOURENCE MARQUES

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

USCINCLANT FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0048

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS AO

SUBJECT: REACTION TO ALVOR AGREEMENT

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

1. THE ACCORD SIGNED BY THE THREE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND THE PORTUGUESE ON JANUARY 15 HAS RECEIVED A MIXED RECEPTION. ANGOLANS OF BOTH RACES ARE RELIEVED THAT THE LONG WAIT IS OVER AND THAT A PRECISE TIMETABLE AND FORMULA FOR INDEPENDENCE HAVE BEEN DECIDED. BLACKS LOOK UPON THE AGREEMENT AS THE BEGINNING; INDEPENDENCE IS THE LONG SOUGHT GOAL AND THEY LOOK FORWARD TO IT EAGERLY. FOR WHITES, THE AGREEMENT REPRESENTS A FURTHER STRIPPING AWAY OF THEIR FORMERLY PRIVILEGED POSITION.

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2. IN POINT OF FACT, THE SPECIAL STATUS OF WHITES IN ANGOLA HAS

BEEN STEADILY ERODING SINCE THE APRIL 25 COUP THAT BROUGHT THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT TO POWER IN PORTUGAL. A GROWING FEELING OF ABANDONMENT COUPLED WITH TWO FLARE-UPS OF VIOLENCE HAVE CAUSED A NUMBER OF WHITES TO PACK UP AND LEAVE, MOST OF THEM TO PORTUGAL AND A FEW TO SOUTH AFRICA OR OTHER NATIONS. THE VAST MAJORITY OF WHITES STILL REMAIN, HOWEVER, AND MOST OF THESE EITHER WANT TO STAY OR DO NOT HAVE THE ECONOMIC MEANS OR SKILLS TO BE ABLE READILY MOVE AWAY AND START A NEW LIFE. WHITES HERE HAVE INVESTED HEAVILY IN ANGOLA AND THEY ARE IN A DILEMMA: ANGOLA IS THEIR HOME AND THEIR FUTURES ARE COMMITTED HERE, BUT THEY FEAR FOR THEIR LIVES AND THEIR PROPERTY AFTER BLACK RULE BECOMES A REALITY. FOR WHITES, THEN, THE SUMMIT AGREEMENT REPRESENTS ANOTHER WATERSHED. IF THE TRANSITION PERIOD GOES RELATIVELY SMOOTHLY AND THE LIBERATION GROUPS RESPECT WHITE RIGHTS THEY WILL PUT THEIR CAPITAL AND SKILLS TO WORK FOR THE NEW REGIME. IF ORDER BREAKS DOWN AND/OR WHITE INTERESTS ARE HARMED, WE CAN EXPECT A MASS EXODUS. THE ASPECT OF THE ALVOR AGREEMENT THAT MOST CONCERNS THE WHITES IS THAT PORTUGUESE TROOPS WILL BEGIN TO PULL OUT OF ANGOLA THIS JULY.

3. BLACKS, THOUGH NOT IN THE STATE OF EUPHORIA WE CAN EXPECT ON INDEPENDENCE DAY, ARE VERY HAPPY ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE. POLITICALLY AWARE BLACKS HAVE BEEN VERY CONCERNED LEST THE LIBERATION GROUPS FAIL TO COMPROMISE ON MAJOR ISSUES. THE MOMBASA AGREEMENTS WERE A HERALD OF BETTER DAYS AND FROM THAT POINT BLACK HOPES OF A PEACEFUL SOLUTION WERE IN THE ASCENDANCY. THE PREDOMINANT FEELING AMONG BLACKS NOW IS ONE OF RELIEF. THEY RECOGNIZE THERE IS A LONG WAY TO GO AND MANY HURDLES TO OVERCOME BEFORE THEIR NEW NATION GAINS STABILITY, BUT THEY ARE NOW OPTIMISTIC THAT THEIR LEADERS CAN WORK TOGETHER TOWARD A COMMON GOAL. AS ONE PROBES DEEPER, HOWEVER, ONE FINDS A NAGGING CONCERN IN THE MINDS OF BLACKS ABOUT THE POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD. ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION BLACKS FORESEE AN ORDERLY TRANSITION, BUT THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE UNKNOWN THAT LIES BEYOND NOVEMBER 11, 1975. THEY WANT TO RUN THEIR NATION, THEY WANT THE PORTUGUESE OUT OF HERE, BUT THEY ARE NOT QUITE CERTAIN THEIR LEADERS ARE CAPABLE OF PERMANENTLY OVERCOMING THEIR DIFFERENCES.

4. THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY IN ANGOLA ARE PLEASED WITH THEMSELVES. AS THEY SEE IT, THEY HAVE BROUGHT THE COLONY SAFELY THROUGH AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT PERIOD. THEY ARE PROUD OF THE JOB DONE BY
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ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO AS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT HERE AND BELIEVE HE IS SLATED FOR BIGGER THINGS IN PORTUGAL. SOME OF THE FEELING UNDOUBTABLY IS A REACTION TO THE CRITICISM DIRECTED AT THE ADMIRAL FROM BLACKS AND WHITES ALIKE FOR HIS SUPPOSED FAVORITISM TOWARD ONE GROUP OR ANOTHER. HIS JOB WAS DIFFICULT IN THE EXTREME AND THERE WAS NO WAY HE COULD HAVE COME OUT OF IT WITHOUT OFFENDING SOMEONE. HE DID REMARKABLY WELL, KNOCKED A LOT OF WHITE HEADS TOGETHER AND EFFECTIVELY STAUNCHED ANY MISCHIEF WHITE EXTREMISTS

MAY HAVE HAD IN MIND. HE CERTAINLY SEEMS TO HAVE INFRINGED THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF SOME WHITES AND SUIT MAY WELL BE BROUGHT AGAINST HIM IN THE COURTS. BUT HE IS A REMARKABLY TOUGH AND RESILIENT OLD BIRD AND WILL NOT WORRY ABOUT SUCH DETAILS.

5. CHURCH LEADERS, PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC ALIKE, ARE UNIFORMLY PLEASED ABOUT THE SUMMIT AGREEMENT. THEY ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT ALL WILL GO SMOOTHLY, BUT THEY DO BELIEVE THAT THE LIBERATION GROUPS WILL MAKE A DETERMINED EFFORT DURING THE TRANSITION TO WORK TOGETHER AND PREVENT VIOLENCE. CATHOLIC CLERGY ARE UNEASY ABOUT MARXIST ELEMENTS IN THE MPLA AND PLAN TO USE ALL THEIR INFLUENCE TO KEEP MPLA RADICALS OUT OF SUCH KEY AREAS AS EDUCATION. CATHOLIC CLERGY CLAIM TO BE ON GOOD TERMS WITH AGOSTI HO NETO AND OTHER MPLA LEADERS AND DO NOT BELIEVE THEY WILL ATTEMPT RADICAL CHANGES IN THE SOCIETY OR ECONOMY.

7. IN SUBSEQUENT CABLES WE WILL ADDRESS THE VARIOUS OPERATIVE CLAUSES OF THE ALVOR AGREEMENT AND PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THEY WILL GO INTO EFFECT.
KILLORAN

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